



## **2003 Biologist/Fisheries Report**

- Six sites, approximately 150 meters each, were chosen for routine sampling. Four sites are located in the special regulation section, and two sites are located in the stocked section.
- Combined fish collections consisted of approximately 17 different species including darters, dace, chubs, shiners, sculpins, suckers, bass, and trout.
- Within the special regulation sections of Whitetop Laurel Creek the average length of rainbow trout was 173-mm (6.8 inches), and the average brown trout was 270-mm (10.6 inches). Catch rates of rainbow and brown trout were 17 rainbow trout in 100 meters and 6 brown trout in 100 meters. Catch rates are down from past samples. This decrease could be a result of low flows and drought conditions in Virginia from 1999-2002.
- The data also shows a significant decrease in the number of young brown trout recruiting to the fishery over the past few years. The average size of brown trout collected in 2003 was 50-mm larger than those collected in 2002. As a result of the decreased numbers of brown trout fingerlings collected in 2002-03, stockings of brown trout fingerlings were made in December 2003 at a rate of 1000 fingerlings per stream mile. The brown trout fingerlings stocked were tagged in the snout with 1-mm coded wire tags (not visible to anglers) to monitor growth and survival over the next few years.
- Within the stocked sections of Whitetop Laurel Creek the average size of rainbow trout was 161-mm (6.3 inches) and the average size of the brown trout was 230-mm (9.0 inches). On average, 10 rainbow trout and 4 brown trout were collected in 100 meters.